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## OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch  
Superintendent

April 1, 2004

To: OPI MASS Representatives

From: Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff

Subject: Summary of OPI Activities for April 2004

Here is a summary of the current activities at the Office of Public Instruction for April 2004. This summary can also be found at [www.opi.state.mt.us/MASSUpdates/](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/MASSUpdates/).

### Office of the State Superintendent

#### **Highlights of State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's Activities for March 2004:**

- Celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday by visiting Rossiter and Broadwater Schools in Helena as "The Cat In The Hat"
- Participated in national conference calls with the Council of Chief State School Officers concerning numerous issues in No Child Left Behind
- Visited schools in Medicine Lake and Plentywood
- Attended the meeting of the Northeast School Superintendents (MASS)
- Hosted a community meeting in Sidney to "Meet with the State Superintendent"
- Chaired the monthly OPI Cabinet meeting
- Worked with Deputy Superintendent Bud Williams and OPI staff in preparation for the US Department of Education's High School Summit
- Participated in numerous newspaper, TV and radio interviews
- Attended a demonstration on Vision Net interactive communication technology
- Attended an Ecuadorian dinner put on by the High School Spanish clubs in Helena to raise money for their trip to Ecuador this summer
- Chaired the meeting of the U.S. General Accounting Office on their visit to OPI to research rural issues and costs of NCLB
- Attended the Board of Public Education's meeting in Helena, including the joint meeting of the Board and the Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council
- Spoke to the American Association of University Women in Missoula
- Attended the meetings of the Land Board, the School Renewal Commission, Board of Regents, the P-20 Leadership Group and the Education Forum
- Participated in a National Public Radio show from Washington DC on NCLB
- Visited with Pat Chlouber, the regional representative for the US Department of Education
- Welcomed the Montana Association of School Superintendents to Helena for their spring conference
- Acted as the Master of Ceremonies at the luncheon to honor Agriculture in Montana Schools
- Planned the summer Reading Summit as part of her Reading Montana! Initiative
- Attended the annual legislative conference for the Council of Chief State School Officers and a national conference on pre-school education

- Met with Senators Baucus and Burns & Congressman Rehberg and their staffs regarding current Congressional issues and their impact on Montana schools
- Welcomed delegates and parents to the annual state FFA conference
- Addressed the Montana Heritage Project Conference during the presentation of student projects to the State of Montana.
- Interviewed with students from The University of Montana Journalism School who are working on a TV documentary on NCLB

### **OPI's Yellow School Bus Tour**

Superintendent Linda McCulloch and 10 members of her staff are scheduled to visit schools in the Flathead and Northwest Montana as part of OPI's Yellow School Bus Tour. During the week of April 12-16, OPI staff will visit Libby Public Schools, West Valley Elementary, Somers Elementary, Ronan Public Schools and Big Fork Schools. The purpose of the Yellow School Bus Tour is to listen and learn about the challenges and successes in Montana schools. OPI Tour Coordinator: Jan Lombardi at [jlombardi@state.mt.us](mailto:jlombardi@state.mt.us), 444-1641 or the OPI website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/YellowBusTour/index.html>

### **Free Books Help Take Sting out of School Immunizations**

Superintendent Linda McCulloch's READ Montana! Initiative has partnered with the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) to promote The Reading Well, "Be Well, Read Well", a program is to promote wellness and reading.

Kindergartners can now receive a book when they are immunized for school entry and their record is updated in the vaccine registry. The books have been sent to Tribal, Indian Health and County Health Departments. Please contact your area health department to participate in the Kindergarten Reading Well project. County health department contact information can be found in the "government" pages of the phone book under either "health dept/services" or "public health nurse", or on-line at

[http://www.dphhs.state.mt.us/services/office\\_locations/county\\_health\\_department/county\\_health\\_departments.htm](http://www.dphhs.state.mt.us/services/office_locations/county_health_department/county_health_departments.htm). OPI Contacts: Debbie Hunsaker at 444-0733, [dhunsaker@state.mt.us](mailto:dhunsaker@state.mt.us) or Jan Lombardi at 444-1641 or [jlombardi@state.mt.us](mailto:jlombardi@state.mt.us).

### **Superintendent Seeking Nominations for Outstanding Educators for OPI Talent Pool**

Superintendent Linda McCulloch is again seeking nominations of outstanding educators for the OPI "Talent Pool". The Talent Pool is a list of K-12 Montana educators who have been recommended to the Office of Public Instruction as outstanding teachers, who have demonstrated exceptional instructional ability, have an inspiring presence, and exhibit professional leadership. The educators on the list may be considered for membership by OPI on advisory boards and task forces, as well as candidates for special recognition programs. This year the talent pool focus is on recommendations for Elementary educators. Nominations must be confidential and the person being nominated must not know they are being considered.

Recommendations should be made on the 2004 Talent Pool Nomination Form ([www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/superintendent/TalentPool04.pdf](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/superintendent/TalentPool04.pdf)) and sent by May 1, 2004, to Jan Lombardi, Superintendent's Office, Office of Public Instruction, PO Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501. OPI Contact: Jan Lombardi at 406-444-1641 or [jlombardi@state.mt.us](mailto:jlombardi@state.mt.us).

### **General Accounting Office Study of NCLB Impacts on Rural States**

The federal General Accounting Office (GAO) is conducting a study of the issues and challenges faced by rural states in the implementation of NCLB. Montana is one of seven

states to receive an on-site review. A three-person team from the GAO visited Montana on March 9. Many of the team's questions focused on the costs of implementing NCLB. In addition to the visit to OPI, the GAO staff visited the Rocky Boy and Browning School Districts. These districts have schools identified for improvement under Title I, a requirement of the study. OPI Contact: Nancy Coopersmith, Assistant Superintendent, (406) 444-5541 or [ncoopersmith@state.mt.us](mailto:ncoopersmith@state.mt.us).

### **Renewal Unit Update for Montana Educators**

Need Renewal Units? OPI has added two features to its website to help you find activities that provide renewal units:

- To review the professional development opportunities that have been approved by OPI for renewal units, check out the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) Web page at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/EdSvs/Index.html> and scroll down to "2004 Professional Development Activities Approved for Renewal Units." The Department of Education Services has added a calendar of information for users to view various approved provider activities occurring throughout 2004. Please choose a month to view the activities. Following the 2004 calendar is the list of Montana approved providers for 2004 that will be conducting professional development activities. Last year county superintendents, government agencies, professional education organizations, school districts, tribal colleges and universities provided over 30,000 Certificates of Registration and Verification for the award of renewal units to Montana educators!
- The OPI Web Calendar includes information showing renewal units that are being offered to attendees and the total number of renewal units available. To view the Calendar, go to <http://www.opi.state.mt.us> and click on the Calendar tab at the top of the home page. Choose the Education Events area of the online calendar. Click on the event of interest to see if it has been approved by OPI for renewal units.

OPI is pleased to provide these services to Montana's educators as they continue to update their educator licenses. Please remember that one hour of instruction is equal to one renewal unit and that all professional development activities must receive prior approval for the award of renewal units. OPI Contacts: Nancy Coopersmith, [ncoopersmith@state.mt.us](mailto:ncoopersmith@state.mt.us) or Carol Gneckow, [cgneckow@state.mt.us](mailto:cgneckow@state.mt.us), (406) 444-2417.

### **State Action for Education Leadership Project**

With funding from the Montana State Action for Education Leadership Project, Claudette Morton recently completed an "Examination of Current Montana Education Policies for Compliance with Accountability, Teacher Quality, and Literacy Aspects of ESEA 2001." Her analysis uses a matrix prepared by the National Association of State School Boards of Education (NASBE) to inventory how Montana laws, state policies, and the variety of documents from state/federal agreements address the specific requirements of NCLB. The report indicates that the State of Montana has in place policy documents that align the state's public school program to the federal legislation, complying in 190 out of 193 compliance points that were included in the inventory. The analysis is posted on the OPI webpage at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/SAELP/index.html>. Contacts: Joanne Erickson, Montana SAELP Project Director, 406-994-2290, [jle@montana.edu](mailto:jle@montana.edu) or Claudette Morton, 447-4218.

### **Montana K-12 Public School Renewal Commission**

The next meeting of the School Renewal Commission will be on April 26, 2004 in Helena at the State Capitol. Information regarding membership, meetings and resources is available on the web: <http://www.discoveringmontana.com/gov2/css/boards/renewal/default.asp>.

Contact: Kris Goss, Education Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor, 406-444-3862, [kgoss@state.mt.us](mailto:kgoss@state.mt.us). OPI Contact: Madalyn Quinlan, 406-444-3168, [mquinlan@state.mt.us](mailto:mquinlan@state.mt.us).

### **March Board of Public Education Meeting Summary**

The OPI staff presented a variety of reports and action items at the March Board of Public Education meeting in Helena. Reports included the State Superintendent's by Linda McCulloch, the School Nutrition Programs Annual Report by Chris Emerson, a No Child Left Behind (NCLB) report by Nancy Coopersmith, an Assessment Update by Judy Snow, a Special Purpose Schools Task Force update and an update on the Professional Educator Preparation Programs Task Force by Linda Peterson. Action items presented by the OPI staff included a report on License Surrenders, Suspensions, Revocations and Disciplinary action by Cathy Warhank, consideration of comments and adoption of the ARM 10.55.907 rule by Michael Hall, Accreditation Recommendations and Alternative Standard requests by Al McMilin. Contacts: Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-6576 or Deputy Superintendent Bud Williams (406) 444-7325.

### **May Board of Public Education Meeting Topics**

The Board of Public Education will hold its next regular meeting May 13-14, 2004, at the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind, 3911 Central Avenue, Great Falls, Montana. Tentative agenda items the OPI will be involved with include the annual GED Report, the annual Student Assessment Report, the annual BASE Aid payment schedule and the State Superintendent's Report. Contacts: Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-6576 or Deputy Superintendent Bud Williams (406) 444-7325.

### **Board of Public Education Student Survey**

Erik Engellant, Student Representative to the Board of Public Education, is conducting a Student Opinion Survey. Erik writes, "Students need to be aware of the many issues facing education and they need a voice to express their thoughts and ideas to the Board. I am privileged to be that voice, but to help do this I conduct an annual student survey. Thank you for any help you can provide to make your students aware of this survey."

Students can participate in taking the Student Opinion Survey by going to the OPI web site at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/RegForms/StudentSurvey04/>.

### **OPI Legal**

#### **Now You Are 18 Booklets**

The "Now You Are 18" booklet has been updated to reflect recent changes in Montana's laws. This booklet outlines many of the rights and responsibilities that change when a person reaches 18. It is a useful tool in discussing with seventeen and eighteen year olds the legal changes that occur when they become adults. The booklet also contains contact information for other entities that may be useful to students. The booklet is available on OPI's website at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/LegalDivision/Now18.pdf>. Due to the cost of publication a print version will not be available. Please download copies for use by your students. If you have any questions please contact Beverly Marlow, Paralegal, 444-3172, [bemarlow@state.mt.us](mailto:bemarlow@state.mt.us).

### **Education Licensure**

**Online renewal:** Implementation of the online renewal process for educators licensed in Montana has gone exceedingly well. As individuals renew, we have identified several positives:

- Instantaneous renewal means an educator can register his or her new license the day of renewal.
- The educator licensure office can guarantee better customer service during the summer season.
- Applications for initial licensure will be processed in a timely manner.
- Educators are viewing electronic renewal as a convenient, comfortable way to renew their teaching licenses.

The acceptance of electronic renewal is demonstrated by the number of educators that have chosen this option to submit renewals since its implementation. From September until December, individuals who had their license expire in 2003 were able to take advantage of the online alternative. During these months, 53 licenses were renewed online. After January 1, 2004, individuals whose license expires in 2004 began to update their credentials online. From January 1, 2004, through March 24, 2004, there have been 380 licenses processed online. As we receive customer feedback, we will continue to improve the features of online renewal to meet the needs of our teachers, administrators, and specialists. OPI Contact: Margaret Bowles, 444-2580 or [mbowles@state.mt.us](mailto:mbowles@state.mt.us)

**Career Fairs:** The Montana Educator Career Fairs are rapidly approaching. In anticipation of making this a powerful recruitment tool for Montana districts, each hosting institution has made every effort to meet the needs of our Montana school districts. Participating districts will have the opportunity to meet new and transitioning educators in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. It is a wonderful opportunity to recruit teaching candidates from colleges and universities across the state and beyond. The Office of Public Instruction licensure staff will be at each Career Fair to assist with any concerns regarding educator licensure.

The Career Fair dates are:

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| • Montana State University-Billings     | April 29 <sup>th</sup> |
| • Montana State University-social       | April 29 <sup>th</sup> |
| • Montana State University              | April 30 <sup>th</sup> |
| • University of Montana pre-fair events | May 2 <sup>nd</sup>    |
| • University of Montana                 | May 3 <sup>rd</sup>    |

OPI Contact: Margaret Bowles (444-2580) or [mbowles@state.mt.us](mailto:mbowles@state.mt.us).

*More Info:* Montana State University-Bozeman Career Services and the College of Education, Health and Human Development will host the third annual Teach Montana Educators' Fair on Friday, April 30, from 9:00 a.m. - noon in the Strand Union Ballrooms C & D. The purpose of this fair is to connect school districts with educators who have a desire to teach grades K-12 in the state of Montana. Time has been allocated for superintendents/principals to conduct interviews during the afternoon hours of 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. if they choose to do so.

#### Assessment

The March 2004 issue of JUMP, the OPI online assessment newsletter, is online at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/Assessment/Newsletters/March2004AssessmtNews.pdf>

#### **Criterion Referenced Test-Alternate (CRT-Alt)**



On March 25, 2003, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) requested that the United States Department of Education grant an exception to the maximum number of proficient scores on the CRT-Alt that can be counted as proficient when calculating adequate yearly progress (AYP). The request for exception asks for an increase to the current statewide 1% limit that is now imposed by NCLB regulations. If Montana receives an exception for the statewide limit, the OPI will have the flexibility necessary to be able to grant exceptions for districts to exceed the 1% limit.

The request for an exception to the 1% limit is based on the small size of Montana's school districts. Under current regulations, Montana's school districts are so small that if exceptions were not granted to the 1% limit, 84 percent of our districts would not be able to count the score of a single student as proficient on the CRT-Alt when calculating AYP. This is due to the fact that 84% of Montana's school districts have a total test enrollment of fewer than 100 students.

Even though the state's request for a statewide exception to the 1 percent rule is based strictly on the size of our districts, it is our intent to apply the flexibility that would come with the increase in the cap gained through this exception to both small districts based on size and larger districts with a disproportionate number of students with significant cognitive disabilities. For further information contact Bob Runkel at [brunkel@state.mt.us](mailto:brunkel@state.mt.us) or by phone 444-4429.

#### School Budgeting and Accounting

##### **"Draft MAEFAIRS" Now Available to Schools**

In an effort to provide school districts the opportunity to estimate budgets in ALL of the budgeted funds for FY 2004-05, the School Finance Division has created "Draft MAEFAIRS". Users cannot submit and will not be able to use this feature for their actual MAEFAIRS reporting. This feature is only for the user's budgeting convenience.

To access Draft MAEFAIRS, go to the OPI website at [www.opi.state.mt.us](http://www.opi.state.mt.us), click on the Iris tab, and enter your username and password. Click on the Draft MAEFAIRS icon, enter your MAEFAIRS registered username and click on login. Draft MAEFAIRS will operate like MAEFAIRS using data on file at OPI as of March 5, 2004. You will notice that Draft MAEFAIRS is identified by a blue background. OPI Contact: Nica Carte, 406-444-4401, [ncarte@state.mt.us](mailto:ncarte@state.mt.us).

##### **Hearing Held on SB 424 and Impact Aid**

Representatives of the Federal Impact Aid Program held a hearing in Helena on March 23, 2004, to address the question of whether SB 424's provisions for paying retirement benefits for federally paid employees are contrary to the Federal Impact Aid statutes. Impact Aid regulations disallow reductions of state payments to school districts based on their receipt of Impact Aid money.

Mark Smith and Cathy Schagh represented the Federal Impact Aid Program. Testimony was presented by several school districts, including Heart Butte, Browning, Rocky Boy, and Poplar. Organizations that presented testimony included the Governor's Office, OPI, School Administrators of Montana, Montana School Boards Association, MEA-MFT, and Indian Impact Schools of Montana. Senator Robert Story testified to explain the legislative perspective on SB 424. The hearing lasted approximately 2-1/2 hours.

The Impact Aid Program will accept written comments for 30 days from the hearing date. Submit comments to: Catherine Schagh, Director Impact Aid Program, US Dept of Education, 400 Maryland Ave SW, Washington, DC 20202. A hearing transcript will be made available on

the website when OPI receives a copy. The Impact Aid Program indicated they intend to issue a determination letter in May 2004. Video of the Federal Impact Aid Hearing held in Helena on March 23, 2004, is available by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/streamer/impactaid/>

OPI Contact: Tal Redpath, (406) 444-3024 or [fredpath@state.mt.us](mailto:fredpath@state.mt.us).

### **Training for New Clerks**

The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) will hold a 2-day training session for new (and almost new) clerks in Helena on April 22 and 23, 2004. MASBO representatives will present numerous basic and advanced topics-payroll, elections, paying the bills, and reconciling the accounts, to name a few. This session is vital for new clerks, and will provide useful information even for experienced clerks, county superintendents, county treasurers, and anyone else interested in school finance. To register, call Lynda Brannon at 442-5599 or email her at [masbo@in-tch.com](mailto:masbo@in-tch.com)

### **The OPI School Budgeting & Accounting Workshops have been scheduled:**

Wednesday, July 7	Kalispell
Thursday, July 8	Missoula
Friday, July 9	Butte
Tuesday, July 13	Sidney
Wednesday, July 14	Miles City
Thursday, July 15	Billings
Wednesday, July 21	Havre
Thursday, July 22	Great Falls

The workshops are from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. each day and focus on budgeting & accounting updates, implementing SB 424 and specific issues relating to small and large schools. Watch your email for registration materials in mid-April. OPI Contact: Nica Carte at (406) 444-4401 or [ncarte@state.mt.us](mailto:ncarte@state.mt.us).

### **1st Semester Transportation Payments**

The 1st semester transportation aid payment was made to districts on March 25. At the time you received the state payment, the county also should have paid its portion of the 1st semester payment. The 2<sup>nd</sup> semester payment will be made June 25. Information for bus route reimbursement, individual contracts and school district payment details are available at <http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/0000D9D9-80000007/00016F9F-80000007/>.

OPI Contact: Maxine Mougeot, (406) 444-3096 or [mmougeot@state.mt.us](mailto:mmougeot@state.mt.us).

### **Election Manual Update**

Recently, the MASBO Election Committee completed an update of the School Election Handbook. The updated manual is accessible on OPI's website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/SchoolFinance/forms/ElecHandbook.pdf> or on MASBO's website at <http://www.masbo.com/public.html>.

Following is a summary of the major changes you will find in the updated manual.

1. New Election Laws: The 2003 legislature made many significant changes to the structure of Montana school elections. These changes occurred as the result of HB87, HB155, HB190, HB198, and HB563.

- Voter ID requirements: The identification requirements of federal and state law will not apply to school elections conducted by school election administrators. The legislature may decide to include schools in the identification requirements next session. However, if the county election administrator conducts the election for the school, the county and/or school election administrator(s) should contact the county attorney for advice on whether identification should be required at that election.
- Absentee ballot procedures: HB563 prohibits third parties from collecting absentee ballot applications. If an elector wants to apply for an absentee ballot, only the elector, an immediate family member, or a guardian may make the application on the elector's behalf. The elector must mail the application for an absentee ballot directly to the election administrator or deliver the application in person.
- Provisional ballots: Provisional ballots are ballots cast by voters whose eligibility has not been verified in accordance with law. The updated manual contains procedures for both voting and counting provisional ballots.
- Write-in candidates: Votes for write-in candidates will no longer be counted if the candidate has not filed a Declaration of Intent, even if there are no other candidates for the office. Furthermore, when candidates' names are written in, misspelled names or parts of candidates' names may be counted only if the vote identifies a candidate by one of the designations filed in the candidate's Declaration of Intent.
- Electioneering. Legislative changes now prohibit electioneering within 100 (formerly 200) feet of a polling place entrance.
- Pay rates for judges: Election judges now must be paid at least minimum wage for the time spent working during an election and at the instruction session.

2. Election by acclamation: A district may declare a trustee election by acclamation regardless of whether they run a General Fund levy election.

3. Form updates: Many of the election forms changed as a result of the election law changes.

This summary is NOT a comprehensive list of all of the changes to the handbook. Therefore, the Elections Committee strongly urges all individuals who are responsible for school elections to review the manual in its entirety. To ensure compliance, election administrators should immediately discontinue using old election forms and begin using the forms from the updated manual. OPI Contact: Mike Waterman, [mwaterman@state.mt.us](mailto:mwaterman@state.mt.us) or (406) 444-4524.

### ESEA Workshops

#### **2004-05 ESEA Annual Consolidated Application Workshops**

The 2004-05 ESEA Annual Consolidated Application Workshops will be presented by videoconference and at three on-site locations. The application has been updated to an electronic completion and submission format. The application workshops are especially important this year because the sessions will include information on the new process to complete and submit to the OPI, as well as programmatic concepts in this year's application.

The videoconference is April 23, 2004, and will utilize a combination of METNET and Vision Net sites across the state. The videoconference will begin at 2:00 p.m. and conclude at 6:00 p.m. We regret that the workshop is scheduled on a Friday afternoon, but that is the only time the METNET and Vision Net sites were available. Workshop space is limited so pre-registration is required. The agenda is attached to the electronic pre-registration. The registration site for the videoconference is <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/RegForms/ESEA/Video.html>



The onsite workshop dates and locations include the following:

April 27, 2004                      Miles City, Town and Country Club, 4<sup>th</sup> and Eagle Street

April 30, 2004                      Great Falls, Hampton Inn, 2301 14<sup>th</sup> Street SW

May 3, 2004                         Missoula, Ruby's Inn, 4825 N. Reserve

Onsite workshops will begin at 1:00 p.m. and end at 4:45 p.m. The agenda is attached to the electronic pre-registration. The registration Web site for the onsite workshop is <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/RegForms/ESEA/Index.html>. All workshop registrations will close on April 19, 2004, at 5:00 p.m.

The ESEA Annual Consolidated Application includes information for Title I, Part A; Title II, Parts A and D; Title IV, Part A; Title V, Part A; and Title VI, Part B, Subparts 1 and 2. The completed application must be submitted to the OPI no later than May 30, 2004. Allocations for all programs are based on preliminary information provided to the OPI by the U.S. Department of Education. It is possible district allocations may change slightly following receipt of the final state allocations.

The applications will not be mailed to the authorized representatives this project year. All application materials and correspondence will be conducted electronically. All authorized representatives are encouraged to attend either an onsite workshop or the videoconference to gain the information necessary to complete the electronic application. Additional information will be sent by official e-mail mid April.

The April 23, 2004, videoconference will be available in video stream format on the OPI Web site after the completion of the workshop. The Web page location will be announced later. OPI Contact: Videoconference pre-registration is [cfrohreich@state.mt.us](mailto:cfrohreich@state.mt.us) and on-site workshops is [merp@state.mt.us](mailto:merp@state.mt.us). If you have difficulty with the electronic registration form, or wish to fax your registration, the fax number is (406) 444-1373.

#### Accreditation Division

##### **E-Rate Technology Plans**

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is modifying the E-Rate technology plan approval process to bring it in line with the manner in which the federal ESEA programs certify to the state their compliance with program requirements. Effective immediately, districts that have previously had a technology plan approved by the OPI (and are now renewing their technology plan approval) for the E-Rate program will complete a statement of assurances for their district assuring the OPI that the technology plan meets all of the program requirements. These districts will no longer submit their plans to the OPI for review. Upon receipt of the completed and signed assurance, the OPI will issue the district a technology plan certification for the appropriate time period allowed. The statement of assurances may be submitted to the OPI at anytime.

Districts that have not previously had a technology plan approved by the OPI for the E-Rate program must submit the plan to the OPI for approval. After the initial approval, the statement of assurances approach may be utilized in subsequent years. The OPI will continue to post information on the approval status of plans on the OPI Web site along with the Free and Reduced Lunch data necessary to complete the E-Rate applications.

The E-Rate information on the OPI Web site can be found at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/ERate2.html>. The E-Rate page is the district's resource for the E-Rate program. The page contains:

- } E-Rate Technology Plan District Statement of Assurances form,
- } E-Rate Technology Plan Evaluation Rubric (for use as a planning tool while completing the local technology plan and for review of new plans submitted to the OPI),
- } E-Rate Technology Plan Samples from Montana districts,
- } Links to E-Rate plans from selected Montana school districts,
- } Links to the Schools and Library Division (SLD) Web site for E-Rate, and
- } Links to frequently asked questions from the SLD concerning technology planning.

For more information on the E-Rate technology plan approval process, or to recommend your district plan as an exemplary plan for other districts to review, contact Michael Hall, (406) 444-4422, or e-mail [mhall@state.mt.us](mailto:mhall@state.mt.us), or Lorraine Burns, (406) 444-1852, or e-mail, [loburns@state.mt.us](mailto:loburns@state.mt.us).

### **Five-Year Comprehensive Plan (5YCEP) Process**

#### **Next Steps: Section F Implementation**

Districts and schools across Montana are finishing up the first year of implementation of their respective five-year plans. Beginning this spring and working on in to the fall of 2004, districts and schools will be reviewing the effectiveness of the goals and action plans put in motion by the 5YCEP design and implementation. Following that review process, districts and schools will be providing the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) a summary of their conclusions. Guidelines for preparing this summary are provided under Section F of the Guidelines for Accreditation Review and Assistance Process Supporting the Five-Year Comprehensive Education Plan Development.

During the last week of April and the first week of May of 2004, working with 4-5 facilitators from the cadre who participated in the initial development of the 5YCEP plans, the OPI will be present a series of workshops and video conferences to assess and assist the continuing development of the 5YCEP process with particular emphasis on (1) dialogues with districts and schools on general implementation issues, questions, concerns, and comments and (2) guidance on the requirements of Section F – Effectiveness Reporting. Dates and locations of these workshops will be forthcoming in an official email.

These next steps are essential as we continue to work with our education partners in districts and schools across the state to fulfill the vision of making continuous education improvement an integral part of the educational process in Montana under 10.55.601. In addition, schools identified for improvement under NCLB are required to be operating under such a model. Montana is a step ahead of that requirement as we already have all districts and schools operating under a continuous improvement model – our 5YCEP process. OPI Contact: Al McMilin, 444-3128, [amcmilin@state.mt.us](mailto:amcmilin@state.mt.us).

### Career, Technical and Adult Education Division

The Montana SkillsUSA-VICA Leadership and Skills Conference will take place on the MSU-Northern campus in Havre on April 5th, 6th, and 7th. Nearly 400 students and advisors from 29 Montana schools will participate along with over 100 support people, including judges and business and industry representatives. OPI Contact: Don Michalsky, 444-4452, [dmichalsky@state.mt.us](mailto:dmichalsky@state.mt.us).

## **Montana HOSA**

### ***Off to a Great Start***

HOSA's newest state association (Montana) is off to a great start with 163 members involved in seven local chapters. The secondary chapters (129 members) are Billings Career Center, Flathead High School, Great Falls Public Schools, Helena High School, and Miles Community College. The two post-secondary chapters (33 members) are MSU-Great Falls College of Technology and Miles Community College. The local advisors have been extremely busy organizing students, developing leadership teams, and creating a plan of work for the year.

Each student is required to pay \$15 for state and national fees, so the students are already busy planning fundraising and community service projects. HOSA members have opportunities to attend leadership, teambuilding, and competitive events throughout the year. One of their goals is to attend the 1st annual **Montana HOSA State Leadership Conference** to be held in Helena at the Colonial Red Lion on April 18-20, 2004. Students will have an opportunity to compete in a variety of healthcare related events. The top three students from each event will qualify to participate in the National Leadership Conference, which will be held on June 23-26, 2004 in Orlando, Florida. OPI Contact: Angie Collins, [angelac@state.mt.us](mailto:angelac@state.mt.us), 406-444-0714.

## **Montana Business and Marketing Conference: Superheroes in Action**

### **1,100 students compete in real-life business scenarios at state conference**

Over 1,100 Montana high school business and marketing students attended the "Montana BPA/DECA: Superheroes in Action" state conference in Great Falls, March 7-9, 2004. This year's event showcased Montana's youth as the "Skilled Workforce of Tomorrow" through statewide competition.

Eighty Montana high school chapters were represented in competitive events, conference workshops, and joint sessions at the annual Montana DECA and Montana Business Professionals of America (BPA) Conference. Students competed in 85 events that test their knowledge and expertise in business and technological skills, marketing, and entrepreneurship. Top placement in the competitive events enabled them to compete at the national conventions coming up in April and May.

Montana Business Professionals of America (BPA) is a career and technical student organization with emphasis on business education including financial services, administrative support, information technology, management, marketing, and human resources. Montana DECA is an association of marketing students who are pursuing studies in marketing, management, and entrepreneurship. For more information about BPA or DECA, visit [www.mtbpadeca.org](http://www.mtbpadeca.org). OPI Contact: Diana Fiedler, 406-444-7991, [dfiedler@state.mt.us](mailto:dfiedler@state.mt.us).

## Special Education Division

### **Update on Montana's IDEA General Supervision Enhancement Grant Activities**

As reported in the November OPI Summary, the Office of Public Instruction is participating in several activities focused on refining its data collection systems to ensure accurate and reliable data. Intelligence Consulting, Salem OR, has been contracted to help with these activities. In

early April, OPI will release a web-based survey for school districts to complete. The purpose of the online survey is twofold: 1) respondents will assist OPI in its understanding existing data needs and problems within school districts, and in return; 2) it will provide districts with the opportunity to participate in the planning and development of a comprehensive statewide education information system and data warehouse. We encourage schools to watch for additional announcements as to the availability of the survey and to take this opportunity to participate in this activity. OPI is committed to improve the accuracy and value of its education data, eliminate paper forms, reduce duplicate data entry, and provide districts access to the data used to report school improvement efforts. Your participation in the survey will help OPI design a system that is efficient, timely, cost effective, and less burdensome. If you have any questions regarding the survey or any of the other activities, please feel free to contact Floy Scott at (406) 243-2892 or [fscott@state.mt.us](mailto:fscott@state.mt.us).

#### Educational Opportunity and Equity Division

##### **Advanced Placement Training Opportunities**

Spring and summer Advanced Placement and pre-Advanced Placement workshops and institutes for Montana teachers (grades 6 through 12) are available for teachers in eligible school districts through the Advanced Placement Incentive grant program. Districts that already have an AP grant may ask for a budget amendment. Eligible districts that have not yet submitted a grant application may do so to cover the costs of the workshops and institutes. The eligibility list, grant application, and registration forms are on the Advanced Placement Incentive Web page (<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/AdvPlacement/index.html>). To register, please refer to the contact person for each event. OPI does not handle any of the registration.

- Montana Advanced Placement Institute, Billings, July 12-16, 2004: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/AdvPlacement/APGrantApp03.pdf>
- Pre-AP Workshop in English and Social Studies, Billings, July 13,14, 2004: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/advplacement/pre-apworkshop.pdf>
- Vertical Team pre-AP workshop in Social Studies, Missoula, May 3, 2004. (Registration form will be posted on the AP Web page soon. In the meantime, you can contact Peggy Mullin in Stevensville at (406) 777-5481, ext. 148)
- 2003-2004 AP and pre-AP training schedule for the Western Region: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/AdvPlacement/APTrainingW.pdf>
- College Success Initiative "SpringBoard" special session in English and Mathematics at the Pacific Northwest AP Institute Bellevue, Washington, June 28-July 1, 2004. For the registration form visit their Web site: [www.bsd405.org/api](http://www.bsd405.org/api)

OPI Contact: Kathleen Molloy, 406-444-4317, [kathym@state.mt.us](mailto:kathym@state.mt.us).

##### **Gifted & Talented Grant-Writing Workshop**

The Gifted and Talented Professional Development Program and the OPI will again host a grant-writing workshop to guide participants through the process of writing the OPI Gifted Grant. Bring your ideas and grant forms! The workshop will be held on April 5 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Room 136 in the Mitchell Building in Helena. This is just to the east of the Capitol on Roberts Street between 5th and Lockey. To register contact, Stephanie Smith, 3091 S. Daffodil, Billings, MT 59102, Phone: 406-652-3720. Cell: 406-672-5032. Email: [sarabeagle@imt.net](mailto:sarabeagle@imt.net). There will be 6 OPI renewal units available.

##### **Revised Paraprofessional Guidance**

Revised Paraprofessional Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education is available at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/paraguidance.pdf>. OPI Contact: Ron Lukenbill, [rlukenbill@state.mt.us](mailto:rlukenbill@state.mt.us), 406-444-5660

### **Families and Learning: Celebrating Partnerships that Work**

The 4th annual statewide conference on Families and Learning will be held in Helena, April 14-16, 2004. The theme of this year's conference is *Families and Learning: Celebrating Partnerships that Work* and includes workshops on early literacy and numeracy, cognitive coaching, school-based models of parent advocacy, working with volunteers and mentors, and family/school/community partnership models. The conference is a professional development opportunity collaboratively designed by the Montana Office of Public Instruction, the Montana Parent Partnerships Information Resource Center, the Montana Statewide Family Literacy Initiative, the GEAR UP program of the Office of Commissioner of Higher Education, and the Montana Head Start State Collaboration Project. It will begin on Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. and conclude Friday at noon.

Renewal units for teachers and early childhood professional development units will be available. You can view or download the brochure and registration form at [www.montanapirc.org](http://www.montanapirc.org). Contact: Barbara Riley, Project Director, Family BASICS / MPIRC, 406-543-3550 ext. 25, [briley@montanapirc.org](mailto:briley@montanapirc.org).

### **Kindergarten Academy**

OPI is hosting a professional development opportunity for preventing learning difficulties in Kindergarten. The Kindergarten Academy will be offered June 14-17, 2004 at the Red Lion Colonial Hotel in Helena. The Texas Reading Academy will provide kindergarten teachers with an enhanced knowledge of effective instructional practices that promote early reading success. The brochure for the Kindergarten Academy can be found at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/ReadingFirst/KinderGAcademy.pdf>. OPI Contact: Kathy Tiefenthaler, 406-444-1872, [ktiefenthaler@state.mt.us](mailto:ktiefenthaler@state.mt.us).

### **Health Enhancement and Safety Division**

#### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Program Announcement/Application**

The 21st Century Community Learning Center Program Announcement/Application for the 2004-2005 Program Year is available at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/21stCentury/0421stCentAppl.pdf>. The application deadline is Wednesday, May 12, 2004. OPI Contact: Gary Pfister, [gpfister@state.mt.us](mailto:gpfister@state.mt.us), (406) 444-3000

### **Coordinated School Health Unit**

#### **2004 School Health Profiles**

The 2004 School Health Profiles (Profiles) was mailed to schools in early March. "Thank You" to the nearly 90 percent of Montana school principals and lead health educators that have returned questionnaires regarding policy and program implementation surrounding various health topics at their school. Upon release of the data, the OPI will produce a report that will be available on the Profiles web site. For more information on the Profiles, go to [www.opi.state.mt.us/SHP](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/SHP). OPI Contact: Susan Court, 406-444-3178, [scourt@state.mt.us](mailto:scourt@state.mt.us).

### **School Discipline Data Collection**

This is a reminder to school districts that school discipline data reports are due in this office by June 30, 2004; and, for those schools that close down shortly after the end of the school year, the time is much shorter. We encourage you to submit your data electronically using the OPI Citrix application. Each school district must submit a completed report for every school in the



district, whether the school has incidents to report or not. General and electronic instructions are available on the web at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/safeschools/index.html> (under the school discipline data collection pull-down menu on the right side of the screen). A training video on electronic submission will also be available at the same web address shortly after the first of April. OPI Contacts: Marion Erp, [merp@state.mt.us](mailto:merp@state.mt.us) or Pat Reichert, 444-4430, [preichert@state.mt.us](mailto:preichert@state.mt.us).

### **i-SAFE Workshop for Teachers**

The Division of Educational Research and Service, U of M is sponsoring a free workshop on *either* April 22 or 23 in Missoula. The Internet safety awareness program provides students with skills to avoid dangerous on-line behavior; participants will be equipped to train others. Contact Ann Minckler, 243-4524, [ann.minckler@mso.umt.edu](mailto:ann.minckler@mso.umt.edu).

### *School Nutrition Program*

#### **Recognizing Foodservice Professionals**

School Nutrition Programs would like to recognize all school food service staff with 20, 25 or 30 years of uninterrupted service to the profession. We would also like to recognize retiring staff that has 20 or more years of service in your school food service program. Please submit the names of food service staff meeting the above criteria so that they may be recognized for their dedication to the school nutrition programs. Send your submissions to [cemerson@state.mt.us](mailto:cemerson@state.mt.us). OPI Contact: School Nutrition Programs, 444-2501.

#### **Child Nutrition Employee Appreciation Week May 3-7**

You know how much you appreciate your school nutrition employees, but do they? Let them know just how much you appreciate their hard work during this special week. Visit [www.asfsa.org](http://www.asfsa.org) for ideas to help your school recognize the efforts of school foodservice professionals. OPI Contact: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501.

### **Save the Date!**

#### **Montana School Food Service Association/Office of Public Instruction Conference**

The 2004 MSFSA/OPI Conference will take place at the Holiday Inn Grand in Billings. The theme for this year is *S.M.A.R.T. – School Meals Achieving Results Together...Do We Measure Up?* Look for more information and registration information coming soon. Contacts: Becky Green, MSFSA, (406) 654-1034, [www.mtsfsa.org](http://www.mtsfsa.org) or Diane Dolan, School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-4416, [didolan@state.mt.us](mailto:didolan@state.mt.us).

#### **Summer Food Service Program Application Deadline May 7**

Application packets for summer food service programs will be sent out April 23. Applications from previous year sponsors are due May 7, 2004. New sponsor applications are due May 28, 2004. OPI Contact: Sofia Janik, (406) 444- 2521, [sjanik@state.mt.us](mailto:sjanik@state.mt.us).

### **Grants Available for Community Gardens through DPHHS**

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) will award four \$1,000 and four \$500 mini-grants to local-level organizations to begin a community garden or to maintain an existing community garden. American Indian reservation communities are especially encouraged to apply for this funding. Priority will be given to applicants who demonstrate that there is limited access to fresh produce in their community. Mini-grant applications must be received by April 30, 2004. For more information or an application, contact Lynda Blades, DPHHS, (406) 444-7324, [lblades@state.mt.us](mailto:lblades@state.mt.us) or School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501.



### **New Food Service Managers**

School Nutrition Programs provides training for new food service managers. Please notify us when you have a new food service manager so that we may provide prompt technical assistance to answer questions and ensure that program requirements are met.

### **Walk to School Day Mini Grant Deadline is April 30**

The Department of Public Health and Human Services has distributed their 2004 Walk to School Day mini grant applications. For more information or to receive an application, contact Jason Swant, Department of Public Health and Human Services, (406) 444-3866.

### **School Nutrition Programs Website**

Be sure to check the OPI, School Nutrition Programs website at [www.opi.state.mt.us](http://www.opi.state.mt.us) for current information about administering school nutrition programs and for tips for creating healthy school nutrition environments. The "Fresh Bytes" section has the up-to-date items of interest.

### **Girl Power: Raising Healthy Girls Workshop**

This is a dynamic workshop for School counselors (especially middle school), teachers, dietitians, nurses, mental health specialists and community agencies that work with youth. The workshop will provide the tools participants need to emphasize overall mental and physical well being among girls. The workshop will be offered in Livingston on April 26, 2004 from 12:30-4:30 p.m. For more information:

Gayla Nicolson, RD, CDE  
(406) 222-7103  
[grn@mcn.net](mailto:grn@mcn.net)

Barbara Wheeler  
(406) 994-6893  
[bwheeler@montana.edu](mailto:bwheeler@montana.edu)

### **Defeating Diabetes! Summit**

*St. Vincent Healthcare, Mansfield Health Education Center, April 16-17, 2004, Billings, MT.*

This workshop is open to anyone interested, but those affiliated with schools on and/or near American Indian Reservations who are concerned about diabetes in their community are especially encouraged to attend. This Summit will focus on physical activity in diabetes prevention, nutrition education curriculums for the classroom, and showcasing successful activities and strategies currently in use on MT reservations. For more information or to register please contact: Molly Stenberg, Montana Team Nutrition Program, (406) 994-5641, [stenberg@montana.edu](mailto:stenberg@montana.edu) or School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501.

### **School Food Service Cooking Institute**

The annual cooking school hosted by the Team Nutrition Program will be held at Montana State University-Bozeman during the week of August 2-6, 2004. This institute will train 20 participants on quantity food production for school-aged children and is designed for new cooks, cook's assistants, new managers/head cooks, or those who want a refresher course on cooking for school-aged children. The overall purpose is to provide a hands-on training session to help school food service personnel prepare delicious and healthy school meals in a cost-effective manner. Space is limited and will be allotted on a first come, first serve basis. Applications are due by June 18, 2004. OPI Contact: Katie Bark, Montana Team Nutrition Program, (406) 994-5641, [kbark@state.mt.us](mailto:kbark@state.mt.us).

### *HIV/AIDS/STD Program*

### **Summer Training for Teachers Announced**

The OPI's annual three-day HIV/AIDS/STD workshop designed to provide effective programs for the reduction of unintended pregnancy, and infection with STDs, including HIV, will be June 16,17, and 18 in Helena at the Wingate Inn. The training focuses on skills development and teaching strategies that will help teachers provide students with age-appropriate material for an HIV/STD unit. OPI Contact for registrations is Susan Court, 406-444-3178 or [scourt@state.mt.us](mailto:scourt@state.mt.us).

### **PIR Day Training at Your School Available**

An HIV/AIDS Training can come to your school – FREE – to help meet professional development requirements. The trainings offer staff development on current HIV information and skills to teach HIV prevention strategies, skills to prevent, or stop, biased comments and other forms of harassment that may exist in the school, and universal precaution procedures for infection control and work site safety. The lively and interactive 5-6 hour trainings are appropriate for K-12 teachers, custodians, bus drivers, school nutrition staff, and other support staff and paraprofessionals. To schedule training, contact Susan Court, 406-444-3178 or [scourt@state.mt.us](mailto:scourt@state.mt.us).

### **Congressional Art Competition**

In 1982, Members of Congress initiated an annual art competition entitled *An Artistic Discovery*. Every year since its inception, House Members have held locally judged competitions within their districts. The winning piece of art from each Congressional district is displayed in the Cannon Tunnel, a pedestrian walkway leading to the United States Capitol, for one year. This walkway is frequented by Members of Congress, staff and the general public as they enter the Capitol Building and thus provides an opportunity for thousands to enjoy the artistic talents of young artists from every Congressional district. The artwork will be on display for one year and will then be returned to the student.

Montana Congressman Dennis Rehberg would like to invite the students of your high school to participate in *An Artistic Discovery* this year. This is a unique opportunity to showcase the creativity of Montana's students.

Due to the generosity of Northwest Airlines, the first place entry winner will receive complimentary airfare so that he or she may attend the unveiling ceremony here in Washington D.C. Complimentary airfare will also be provided for an accompanying parent or guardian.

Each student participating in the contest should mail his or her art to:

Congressman Denny Rehberg  
1201 Grand Avenue, Suite 1  
Billings, MT 59102

The deadline for receiving an original entry is May 7, 2004 at 5:00 p.m. The student release form (<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/superintendent/CongArtContst.pdf>) must accompany the artwork or be faxed in advance to Rehberg's Billings office at (406) 256-4934. This ensures the winning student's name will be included in the unveiling ceremony in Washington, D.C. An Avery label must also be affixed to the art piece. Please refer to the contest rules at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/superintendent/CongArtContst.pdf> for further details about the competition. Contact: Ruth Bond at 1-888-232-2626 or 406-256-1019.

### Census Workshops

The Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC) in the Montana Department of Commerce and the U.S. Census Bureau, Denver Regional Office, will be conducting Census workshops in Billings and Glendive the week of April 19-22, 2004.

The Center for Applied Economic Research, Montana State University in Billings, will host three Census Workshops on April 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004. Registration is required and is being handled by the Center for Applied Economic Research. If you have questions about registering, please contact Kristin Wagner at the Center at (406) 657-1742 or [kwagner@msubillings.edu](mailto:kwagner@msubillings.edu)

The workshops will be:

<i>Introduction to American Fact Finder</i>	April 20th, 8:30am-noon
<i>Using Census Data for Funding Proposals</i>	April 20th, 1:30pm-5:00pm
<i>How Small Businesses Can Profit from Information</i>	April 21st, 8:30am-11:30am

The Jane Carey Memorial Library at Dawson Community College in Glendive will host two Census Workshops on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2004. Registration is required and is being handled by the Jane Carey Memorial Library. If you have questions about registering, please contact Andrine Haas at the Library at (406) 377-9413 or [andrine\\_h@dawson.edu](mailto:andrine_h@dawson.edu).

The workshops will be:

<i>Census on the Net/American Fact Finder</i>	April 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 10:00am - 1:00pm
<i>Community Neighborhood Analysis</i>	April 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2:00pm-5:00pm.

For full descriptions and registration forms, visit the Census and Economic Information Center web site at <http://ceic.commerce.state.mt.us/workshop.htm>. Contact: Pam Harris, Bureau Chief, Census and Economic Information Center, Montana Department of Commerce, (406) 841-2739, [paharris@state.mt.us](mailto:paharris@state.mt.us), <http://ceic.commerce.state.mt.us>.